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Montana State Fund Guardian

JUNE 1998

THE STATE FUND'S STATE OF THE ART PHONE SYSTEM

By Karen Kay Wegner

Meridian Max, our new phone system, has been up and running in the Customer Service Unit for two months. Meridian Max collects and records information on all calls that enter Meridian 1. It provides real time statistical displays, historical reporting on the call center operation, and 800 number management. The system responds quickly to fluctuations in call traffic and offers complete flexibility to manage changes. Supervisors' computers are equipped with the software to monitor the information provided by Meridian Max and improve system operations when required.

MERIDIAN MAX FEATURES AND ADVANTAGES

1. **Monitors the number of phone calls and user groups.** This helps supervisors to staff peak phone times appropriately and delegate projects when time allows.

2. **Meridian Max compiles statistics based on a supervisor's criteria.** It tracks the true hold time of calls, the average hold time before a caller hangs up, the amount of time a representative is away from the phone, the time a representative takes between calls, the amount of time spent on each call, the number of incoming calls, and the number of outgoing calls.

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MURER DECISION

Murer is a case which, under Court scrutiny, has required the identification and payment of up to 7,500 claimants with injuries occurring between July 1, 1987 and June 30, 1991. Accomplishing this task has required the coordination not only of the Claim Department but MIS, Accounting, and Customer Service.

Claim Adjuster Lucinda Dixon explains several steps in the process. Microfiche files are requested from the file room, and five temporary workers make copies and complete an initial evaluation form. They then separate the files into settled cases and unsettled cases. If a case was settled, it is reviewed further by the Legal Department. If a claimant is eligible for further benefits, the file goes to an adjuster.

Lucinda's co-workers say the project's success to date is due, in large part, to Lucinda's effort and commitment. Lucinda adds, "Coordinating the project has been a learning process and a real adventure!"

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we conclude this fiscal year, I want to thank you for your dedication and hard work. We continue to make improvements and build on our organizational strengths with business enhancements.

This past year, through the hard work of every employee, we accomplished many of our goals.

Our partnership with insurance agencies, which now includes 250 producers, continues to make strides. This partnership helps ensure our long term viability by maintaining a healthy cross section of business and providing valuable, local service and information to employers. We created and offered Employers Liability coverage to policyholders, and Other States Coverage is on track for implementation next fiscal year.

Another tremendous accomplishment this year is the completion of the third and final phase of our pay-for-performance system. After three years of phasing in this market driven system, each position at State Fund is in the correct pay range and is competitive to our market.

The State Fund wide employee commitment to delivering superior customer service is evident again in the results of the 1998 Customer Satisfaction Survey. Ninety-six percent of policyholders were satisfied or very satisfied with the State Fund.

Reflecting on these accomplishments, it is easy to see how each and every employee has helped to make the State Fund successful. Thank you again for your professionalism and commitment.

Have a great summer.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Lucinda Dixon, Claim Adjuster and coordinator of the Murer project is the May Employee of the Month. Nominated for her outstanding commitment to the Murer case, Lucinda has been liaison, negotiator, planner, organizer, leader, and trainer to all involved in this case.

Lucinda's co-workers comment on her work ethic, "Lucinda has worked extraordinary amounts of overtime making sure this process runs smoothly. She has taken it upon herself to keep open communication with the Claim Department, MIS, Accounting, and Customer Service. Because of her efforts, we are currently ahead of schedule." Lucinda has done all of this and still continues to manage her full case load. She keeps a positive attitude and a sense of humor through the whole process.

Lucinda continues to make herself available to other adjusters and other departments to answer questions and solve problems as they arise. The obstacles that have arisen would deter most; she remains undaunted.

Her co-workers conclude, "She is a ball of energy and works tirelessly. The Murer project's success to date is very much due to the extraordinary efforts Lucinda has put forth.

Thanks Lucinda, for your constant energy, professionalism, and commitment.

KUDOS KOLUMN

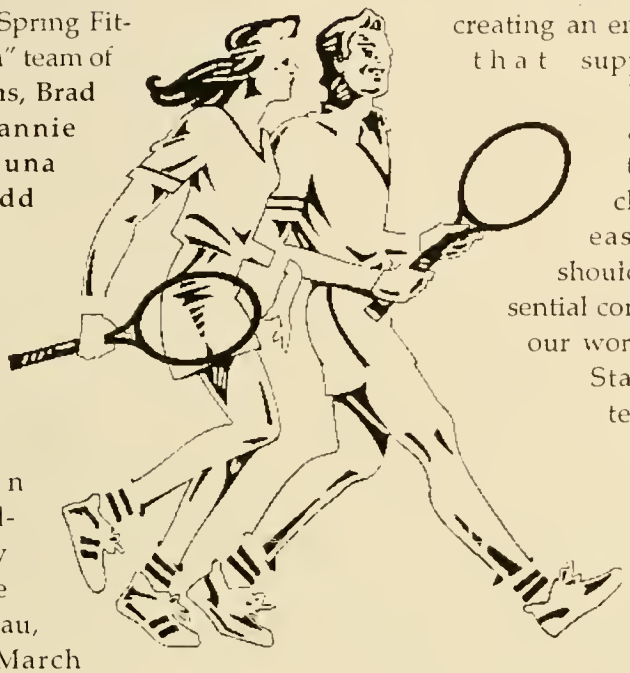
Mary Ellen Bishop of the Hardway Ranch recently told Nance Hughes she really liked the progress we've made since we started the Customer Service Unit. She said, "Things seem to go a lot quicker when I call in the claim. The State Fund is always courteous and helpful when I call in. The last several years, I feel like the State Fund works with me and not against me. I appreciate that." Mary Ellen also complimented our progress in claim investigations. She now feels if she questions a claim we will take the time to look into it more than we did in the past. Good job **Customer Service Unit, Fraud Unit, and Claim Department.**

Dorothy Clark from OMNI Consulting Services in Billings wrote a note thanking **Kim Erickson** for her outstanding customer service. Dorothy wrote, "Kim received my call at 1:50 and by 2:00 I received an 11 page fax of the information I requested. The State Fund has a valuable group of employees, beginning with the Customer Service Unit."

Captain Young with the Montana Highway Patrol told Jim Hultin he recently called in a claim to **Mona Tangen**, and was very impressed with her service. He said, "she was very courteous and professional."

Christie from Marie's Arteries told Karen Wegner that **Carolyn McCloud** was a "very nice person to work with."

MOVE TO IMPROVE



Congratulations to the State Fund "Spring Fitness Program" team of Sandy Adams, Brad Cozzie, Jeannie Davis, Shauna Foley, Todd Jones, Carol Morris, Robin Pugh, and Tim Tindall. This health promotion program, administered by the Employee Benefits Bureau, begins in March and ends in early June. The program offers individual training packets, as well as a team program for those who prefer the fun of group activities. In its third year, the program has grown from 28 teams participating the first year to 125 teams of state employees.

Governor Racicot recognized the participants in a ceremony held at the Capitol on June 18. A supporter of the program, he says, "The promotion of regular physical activity and healthy eating while creating an environment that supports these behaviors are critical to reducing chronic diseases and should be an essential component of our workplaces."

State Fund team member Todd Jones says of the program, "It just encourages you to stay active. I'd walk on breaks, and keep track of other activities like biking or hiking in a booklet. We also got points if the whole team wore a nutrition button once a week." Team captain Jeannie Davis said the team placed 34th. She adds, "I know we enjoyed the program, and hopefully, more State Fund teams will join next year."

Meridian Max, Continued from page 1.

3. Detailed report functions. Reports can be made from statistics to help supervisors address staffing requirements and performance issues. Information is stored for up to three years allowing comparisons of past and current information, trend identification, and forecasts.

5. Meridian Max will keep up with technology. The system is computer driven and has the flexibility to grow as our needs grow.

Meridian Max, through its call management features, supports the State Fund's commitment to a superior level of customer service. Although it contributes greatly to the Customer Service Unit, the reports generated from the system will be an asset to the entire State Fund.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Personnel changes as of June 19, 1998

NEW HIRES

Tim Fitzpatrick, Claim
Kris Matteucci, Claim
Rodney Wright, MIS

DEPARTURES

Lauree Kramer, Underwriting
Judi Whitney, Claim

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

The special activities committee is hard at work planning summer events. An ice cream sale is planned for **July 2**, and be sure you mark your calendar to attend the summer picnic on **July 24.**

Summer Picnic:
When: July 24, 5-9pm
Where: Waterski Mania
What: Children's games, skiing/judging contest, horseshoe tournament. All with prizes.

TRAINING CALENDAR

July training opportunities are currently being finalized as part of the FY99 training calendar. Please contact Morgan Hahn in HR for more information on upcoming training opportunities.

NEW EMPLOYEES

Tony DeVito recently joined the State Fund as LAN Manager. Tony's past job experience includes senior systems analyst/trainer for State Department contractor in Washington D.C., network technician for MGC Communications in Las Vegas, and interpreter/translator in Iwate, Japan. Tony earned a BA in Japanese Language Studies in 1993 from Monterey Institute of International Studies, he is also a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer, and a Microsoft Certified Trainer. Tony is from Indiana and enjoys reading, music, animals, and nature. He adds, "I'd like to learn how to fish, go hiking, and camping. I've never been fishing and seldom have the chance to hike or camp."

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

How can customers service skills be perfected? A quote by Bruce Barton holds a big clue:

"Generally speaking, the great achieve their greatness by industry rather than by brilliance."

Perhaps nowhere is Barton's statement more true than in the customer service profession. The very definition of brilliant customer service may be that a customer's needs are attended to as energetically and industriously as possible.

What positions the State Fund's service above the competition is consistent quality. And achieving that level of expertise takes practice.

To be the best customer service provider, there must be a commitment to excellent service and dedication to customers to continually practice better ways to communicate, handle requests, solve problems, and expedite service.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

That's the best way to be a "perfect" service provider.

STATE FUND GOLF TOURNAMENT RESULTS

The 1998 State Fund Golf Tournament was held on June 5 at Bill Roberts Golf Course. Congratulations to the team of Shawn Bubb, Andy Anderson, Marvin Kraft, and Jim Worthington who claimed first place. This is the second straight year Shawn and Andy have been on the winning team. The team of Tim Fitzpatrick, John Thomas, Brad Cozzie, and Larry Thomas; and the team of Darcie Dunlap and Will Lynn and Bill C. (from Crawford) tied for second place.

Others teams participating were Dave Miller, Robin Pugh, Pat Nistler, and Randy Marcus; and Judy Simpson, Ben Jones, Bob Antonich, and Mike Wittrock.

Editor: Joanne Shydian
Managing Editor: Shannon Copps
Employee Reporters:
Kathy Rowsey Karen Wegner
Charlie Adams Jay Phillips

Please call 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

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